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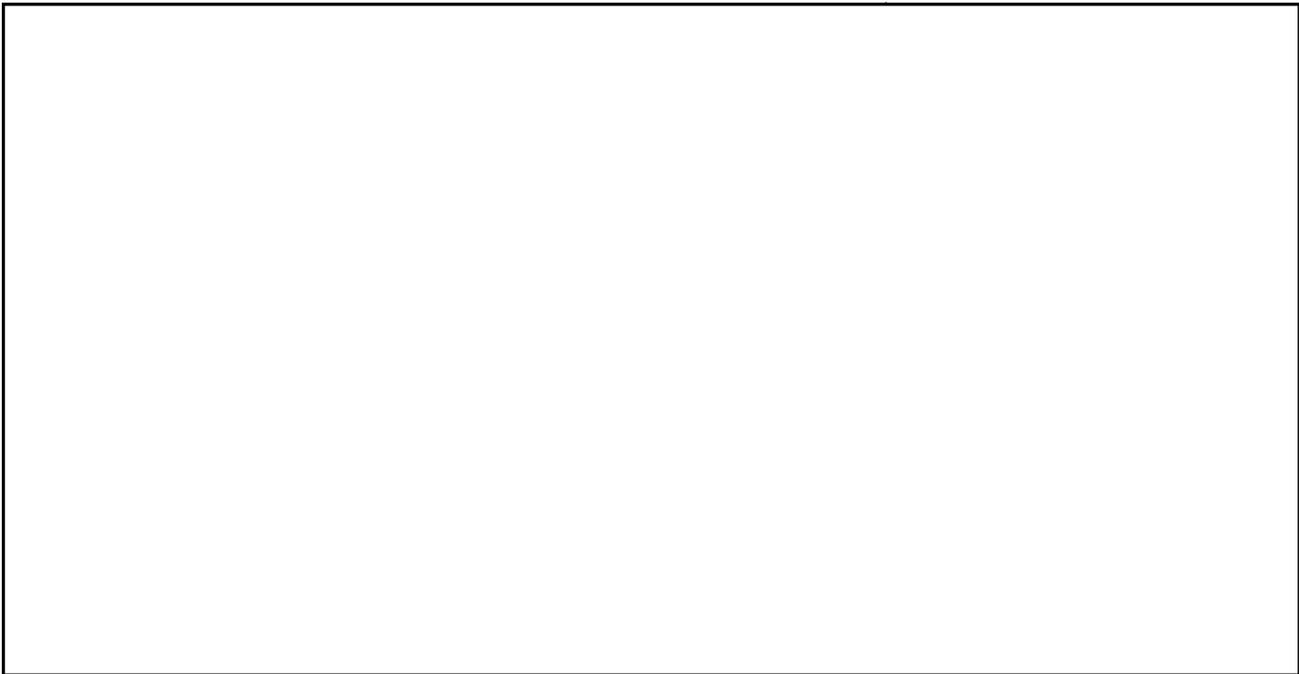
18 August 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: White House Meeting of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group - 17 August 1971

1. On the afternoon of 17 August I attended a meeting of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group in the NSC staff conference room of the Executive Office Building. The meeting was chaired by General Al Haig, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and was attended by John Dean, Counsel to the President; Ken BeLieu, Hal Sonnenfeldt and John Lehman, of the White House staff; Dave Abshire, Joe Wolf and Russ Fessenden, of the State Department; Bill Rehnquist, Assistant Attorney General from Justice; and Rady Johnson, General Jim Lawrence and Stuart French, of Defense.

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3. Regarding the Agency Radios, Abshire commented that Chairman Morgan, of House Foreign Affairs Committee, planned hearings in September and State was trying to organize support for the Administration bill. He said that if things could move along briskly on the House side the problem in the Senate might be eased. He mentioned a proposal that Representative Dante Fascell (D., Fla.) head a commission of congressional, executive, and private representatives to supervise the Radios for a two-year period, and at the end of that time make recommendation regarding their long-term future. However, it was noted that no solution as to how such a commission could be funded without congressional appropriation had been found. Abshire commented that Radio Liberty's Yiddish language programs were a good political selling point among House liberals (although I understand that in fact Radio Liberty presently schedules no such programs).

4. Regarding the Church and Badillo bills forbidding Agency involvement in, or support of, paramilitary operations, I took the position that the matter involved an implicit constitutional question, pointing out that:

a. They concerned the President's authority to draw on the resources of executive agencies in carrying out his constitutional responsibilities regarding foreign policy and national defense, and

b. It would therefore be more appropriate for a policy arm of the Administration, rather than CIA, to speak to this point.

Rehnquist commented that these bills were in effect amendments to the National Security Act of 1947, and if it were assumed that the Agency's authority to conduct paramilitary operations was based on that Act, then Congress would have the right to revoke or limit this authority. Haig agreed that the Agency itself should not be the Administration spokesman in dealing with the Congress on this legislation and asked that we take a reading after the current recess to see what prospects the bills had of passing. He said if it appeared the bills were moving, the White House would go to bat for us. However, it was noted since the provisions of these bills might be tacked on as amendments or riders to other legislation, we could not be sure when or how the issue might come up.

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6. The remaining discussions dealt with a number of matters primarily relating to executive privilege and the Administration's relations with the Congress not of direct concern to the Agency.



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